CHARLTON COMICS
ON THE PLANET MONGO
FLASH GORDON
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
NO. 17
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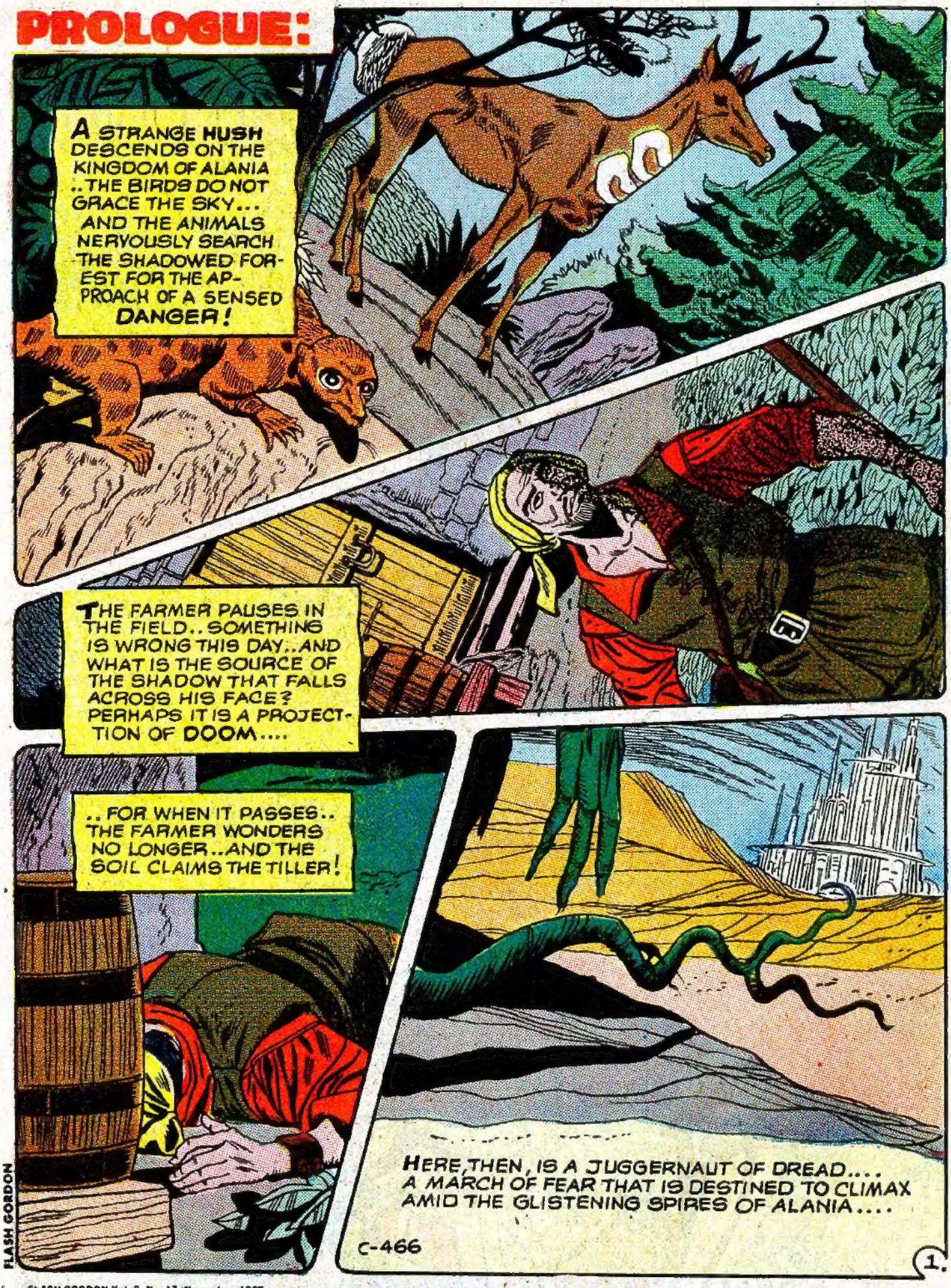
AAAGGGGAAAAA
THE CREEPING MENACE

PROLOGUE:


A STRANGE HUSH DESCENDS ON THE KINGDOM OF ALANIA ..THE BIRDS DO NOT GRACE THE SKY... AND THE ANIMALS NERVOUSLY SEARCH THE SHADOWED FOREST FOR THE APPROACH OF A SENSED DANGER!
THE FARMER PAUSES IN THE FIELD.. SOMETHING IS WRONG THIS DAY..AND WHAT IS THE SOURCE OF THE SHADOW THAT FALLS ACROSS HIS FACE? PERHAPS IT IS A PROJECTTION OF DOOM....
..FOR WHEN IT PASSES.. THE FARMER WONDERS NO LONGER..AND THE SOIL CLAIMS THE TILLER!
HERE,THEN, IS A JUGGERNAUT OF DREAD.... A MARCH OF FEAR THAT IS DESTINED TO CLIMAX AMID THE GLISTENING SPIRES OF ALANIA....
C-466
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FLASH GORDON

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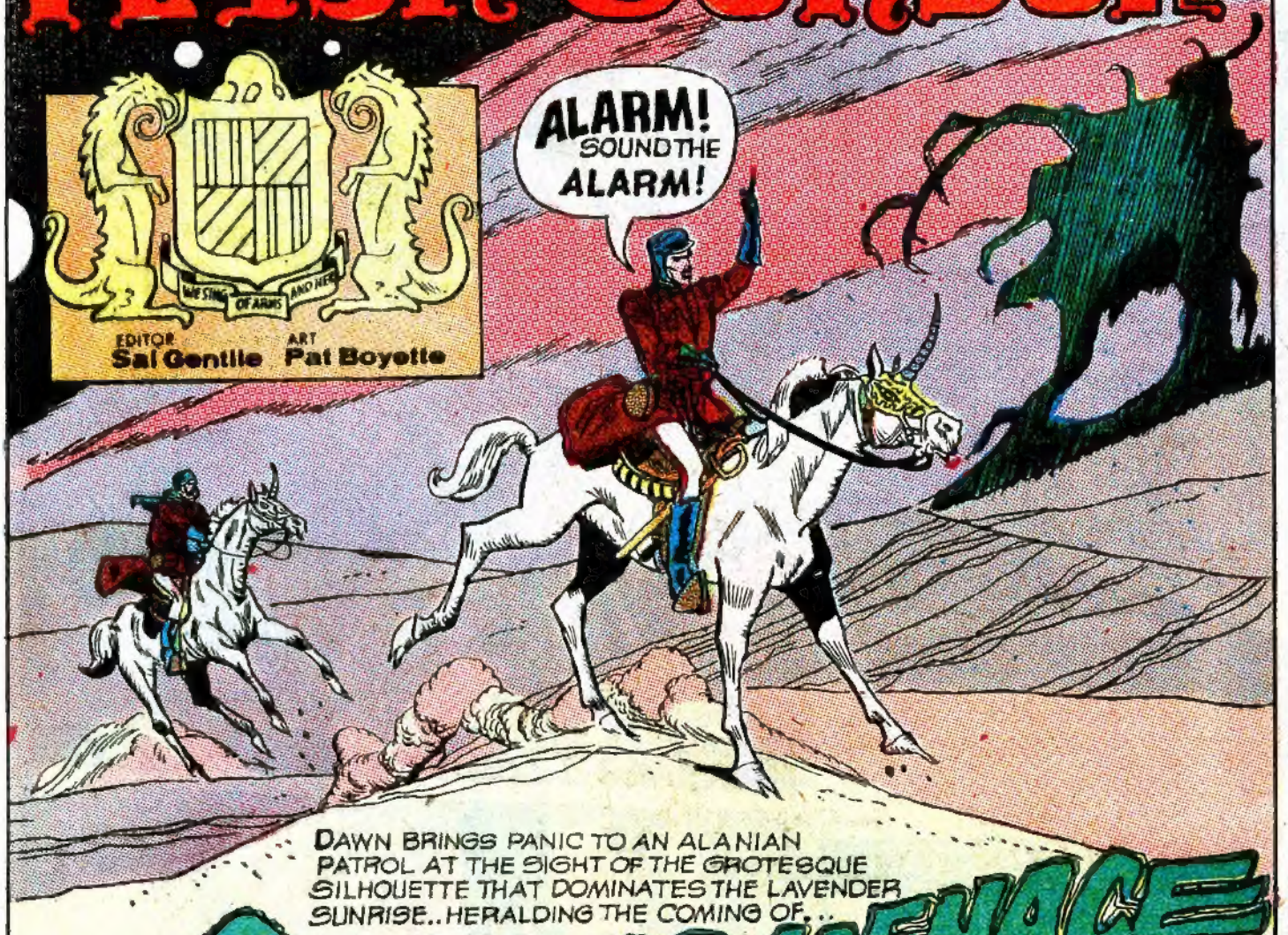
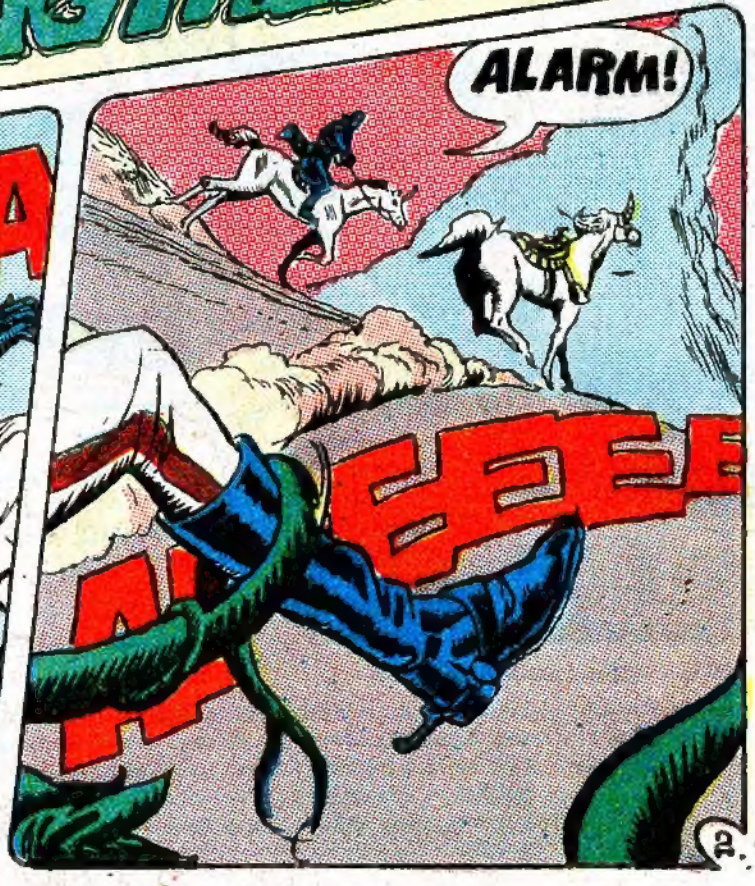
FLASH GORDON

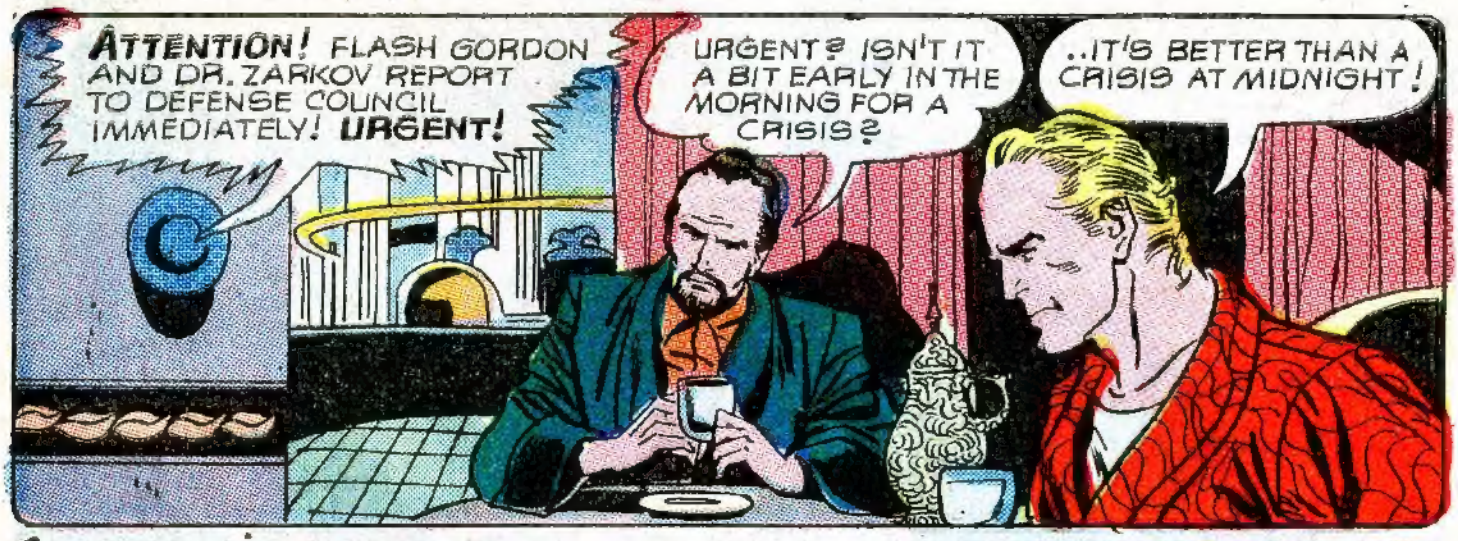
EDITOR **Sal Gentile** ART **Pat Boyette**



DAWN BRINGS PANIC TO AN ALANIAN PATROL AT THE SIGHT OF THE GROTESQUE SILHOUETTE THAT DOMINATES THE LAVENDER SUNRISE.. HERALDING THE COMING OF...

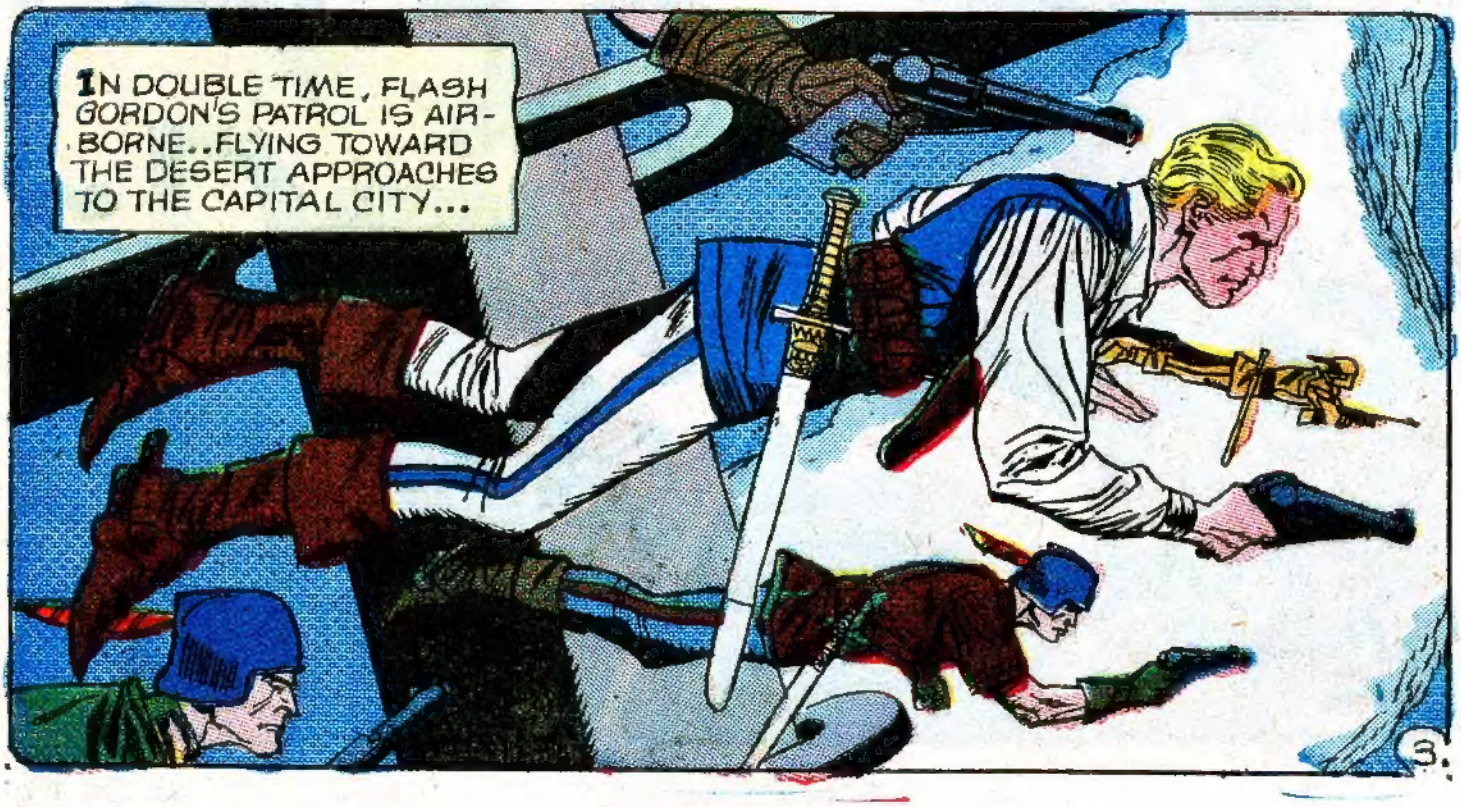
THE CREEPING MENACE




ATTENTION! FLASH GORDON AND DR. ZARKOV REPORT TO DEFENSE COUNCIL IMMEDIATELY! URGENT!
URGENT? ISN'T IT A BIT EARLY IN THE MORNING FOR A CRISIS?
..IT'S BETTER THAN A CRISIS AT MIDNIGHT!

THE TWO EARTHMEN ARE GIVEN A HURRIED BRIEFING BY KING BARIN!

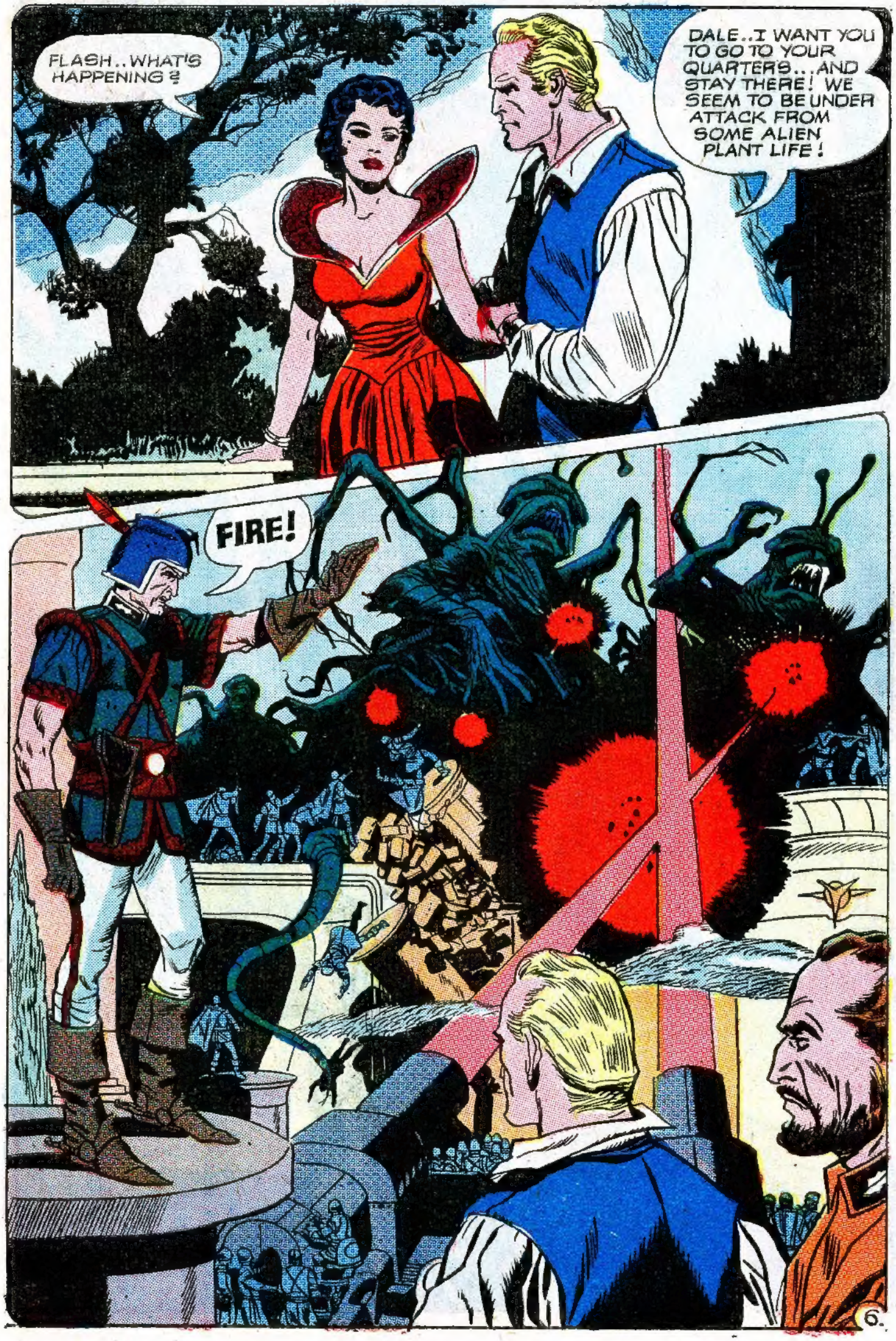
...WE DON'T YET KNOW WHAT THIS THING IS... BUT IT SEEMS TO BE ADVANCING ON THE CITY AT ABOUT FIVE KILOMETERS AN HOUR!
THAT GIVES US TIME FOR A QUICK INVESTIGATIVE PROBE AT LEAST!



INCREDIBLE! THIS THING IS NEARLY TWO-STORIES TALL....
LOOK, FLASH...THERE'S ANOTHER ONE!
DON'T GET TOO CLOSE, CAPTAIN..THESE THINGS ARE...
AHHH!

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

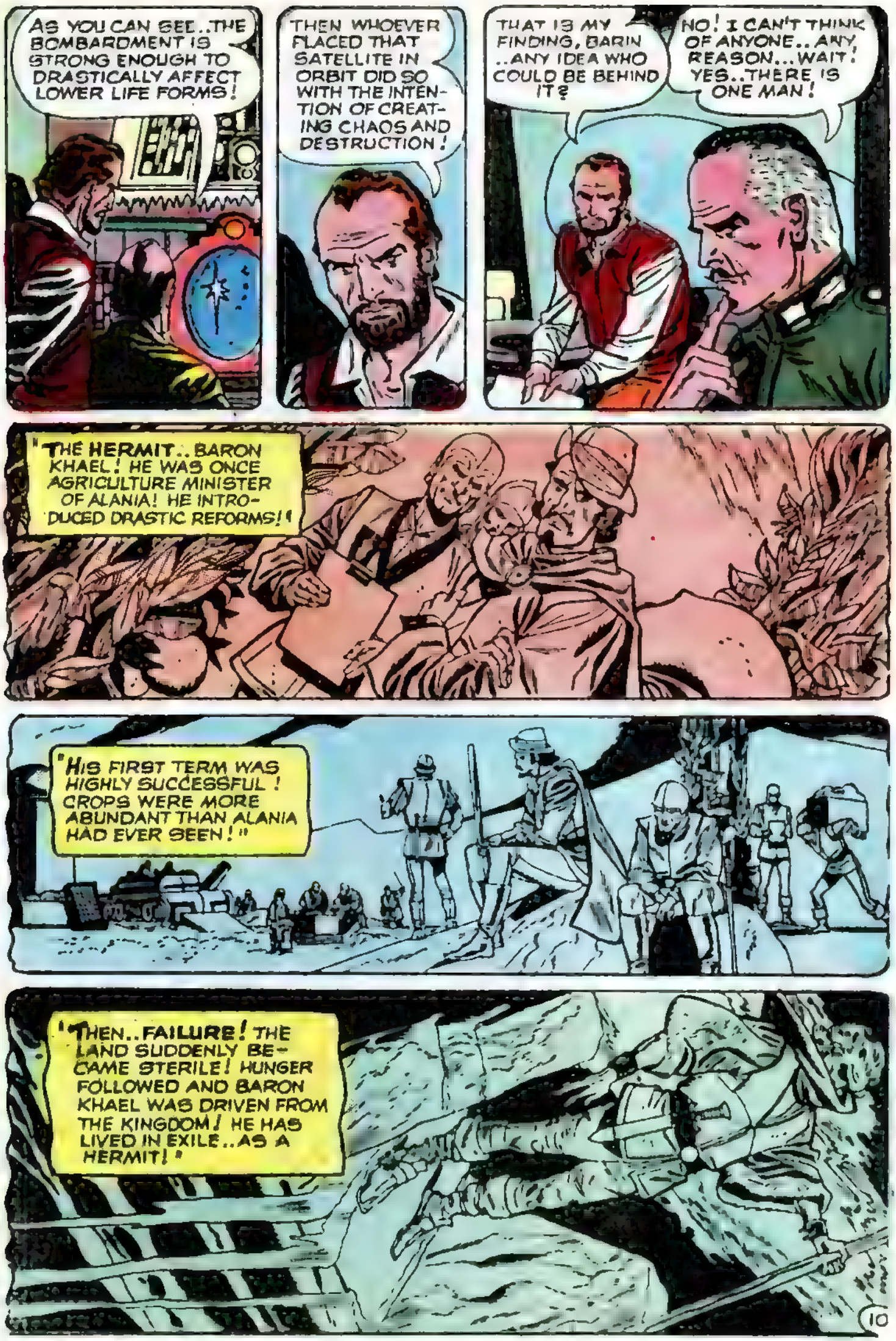
THE GIANT PLANT CREATURE RECOILS FROM THE HEAT OF FLASH'S BLASTER...
I'VE GOT THE CAPTAIN!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
WE NOW KNOW THAT RAYS CAN PUT THE STING TO THEM!
BUT, PERHAPS NOT STOP THEM..THEY'RE STILL ADVANCING!
DR. ZARKOV MAY HAVE SOME RESERVATIONS.. BUT I'M CONFIDENT WE CAN STOP THEM WITH HEAT CANNONS FROM THE GATE! THERE ARE ONLY TWO OF THE THINGS AND...
FOUR! IT HAS JUST BEEN REPORTED... THERE'RE NOW FOUR CREATURES!
AND, WITHIN MINUTES, THE NUMBER HAS GROWN TO TEN AND THE ALANIA GATES LOOM JUST AHEAD....


FLASH..WHAT'S HAPPENING?
DALE..I WANT YOU TO GO TO YOUR QUARTERS...AND STAY THERE! WE SEEM TO BE UNDER ATTACK FROM SOME ALIEN PLANT LIFE!
FIRE!

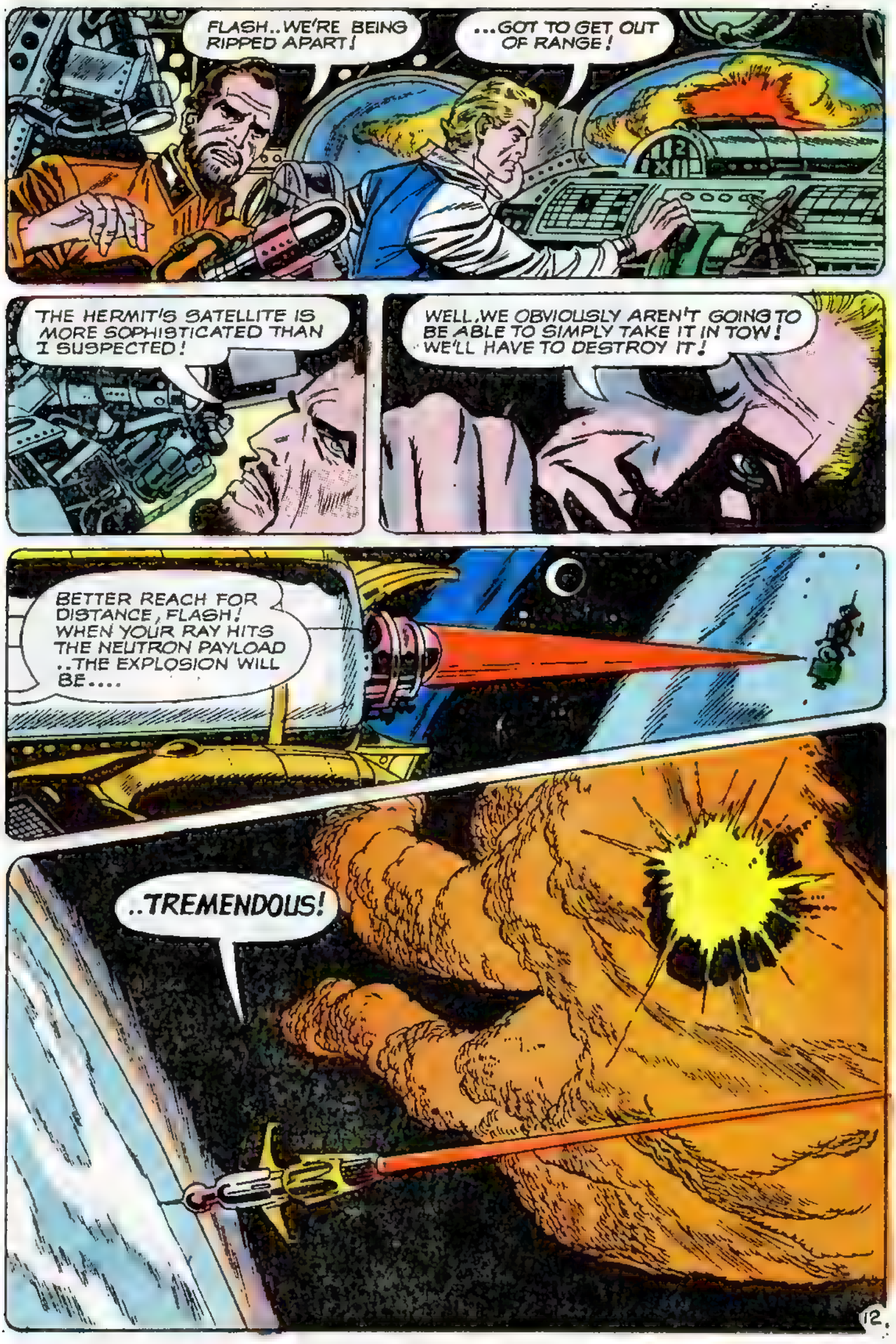
THEY'RE BREAKING THROUGH!
THE ADVANCING CREATURES ARE MET BY A DEVASTATING WALL OF FIRE!
WE'VE PRESSED EVERY UNIT INTO ACTION, FLASH!
IT'S WORKING, BARIN! THEY CAN'T STAND AGAINST THIS!
THE CONCENTRATED RAYS GLOW WITH THE BRILLIANCE OF THE SUN, AND THE PLANTS FALTER AND WITHER IN THE FACE OF THIS ALL-OUT DEFENSE!

..WE'VE WON! THERE FALLS THE LAST OF THEM!
I'LL MAINTAIN PATROLS TO MAKE CERTAIN THERE ARE NO MORE IN THE DESERT!
MEANTIME, DR. ZARKOV..CAN YOU GIVE US A LAB REPORT ON THESE CREATURES? WHAT ARE THEY?
IF THEY ARE JUST UNINTELLIGENT PLANT MUTATIONS..THEN WHAT CAUSED THEM TO GO ON A RAMPAGE?
IN THE QUARTERS OF DALE ARDEN, THE STRANGE CASE OF THE ATTACKING PLANTS IS TAKING A DRAMATIC TURN!

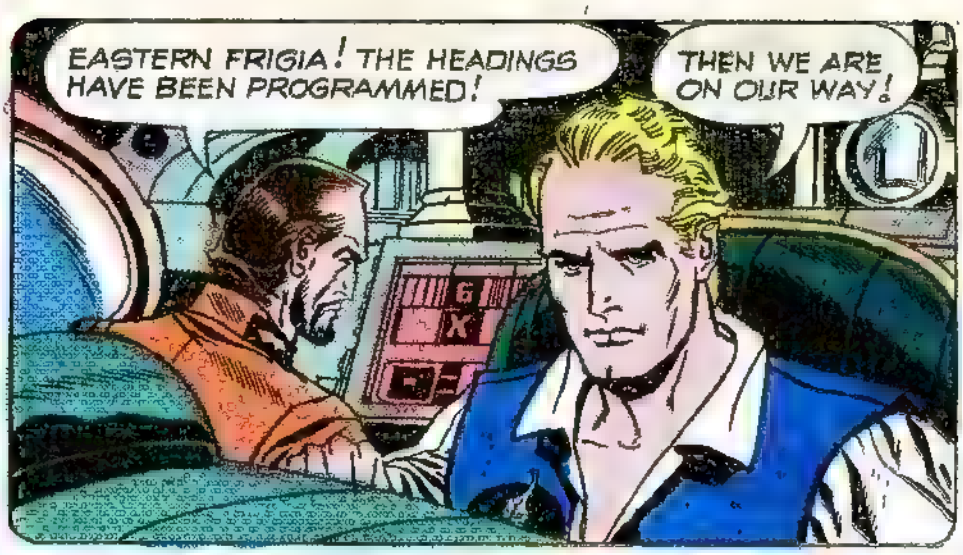
AIEEE!
DALE!
AIEEE!
DR. ZARKOV... WE'VE COMPLETED THE SPECTRCON SURVEY, AND WE'RE UNDER A NEUTRON BOMBARDMENT FROM SATELLITE CLUSTER TEN!
NO SIMPLE HOUSEHOLD PLANT CAN BECOME A VICIOUS MONSTER WITHOUT SOME DIRECTED AND POWERFUL INFLUENCE!
FLASH.. THIS GIVES US A NEW CLUE.. A POSSIBLE NEW INVESTIGATIVE APPROACH! I'M TAKING THIS SAMPLE TO THE LAB!
THERE...IT'S ALL RIGHT! THE THING IS DEAD!


AS YOU CAN SEE..THE BOMBARDMENT IS STRONG ENOUGH TO DRASTICALLY AFFECT LOWER LIFE FORMS!
THEN WHOEVER PLACED THAT SATELLITE IN ORBIT DID SO WITH THE INTENTION OF CREATING CHAOS AND DESTRUCTION!
THAT IS MY FINDING, BARIN ..ANY IDEA WHO COULD BE BEHIND IT?
NO! I CAN'T THINK OF ANYONE.. ANY REASON...WAIT! YES..THERE IS ONE MAN!
"THE HERMIT.. BARON KHAEL! HE WAS ONCE AGRICULTURE MINISTER OF ALANIA! HE INTRODUCED DRASTIC REFORMS!"
"HIS FIRST TERM WAS HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL! CROPS WERE MORE ABUNDANT THAN ALANIA HAD EVER SEEN!"
"THEN..FAILURE! THE LAND SUDDENLY BECAME STERILE! HUNGER FOLLOWED AND BARON KHAEL WAS DRIVEN FROM THE KINGDOM! HE HAS LIVED IN EXILE..AS A HERMIT!"

AND DON'T MISUNDERSTAND..THE BARON IS A COMPETENT SCIENTIST ..ALSO-HE'S EMBRACED SORCERY! YES.. HE'S CAPABLE OF ORGANIZING THE PLANT ATTACK!
..AND REVENGE WOULD BE HIS MOTIVE!
IN ANY CASE.. THE NEUTRON SATELLITE MUST BE REMOVED!
IF YOU'LL ARRANGE FOR A SWEEPER SHIP ..I'LL BRIEF FLASH AND WE'LL PAY A CALL ON THIS... HERMIT!
AND SO, ROARING ROCKET ENGINES HURL FLASH AND ZARKOV TOWARD SATELLITE CLUSTER TEN!
..AS THEY APPROACH THE OFFENDING SATELLITE...
EVADE! FLASH..THAT THINGS GOT A DEFENSE SYSTEM!


FLASH..WE'RE BEING RIPPED APART!
...GOT TO GET OUT OF RANGE!
THE HERMIT'S SATELLITE IS MORE SOPHISTICATED THAN I SUSPECTED!
WELL,WE OBVIOUSLY AREN'T GOING TO BE ABLE TO SIMPLY TAKE IT IN TOW! WE'LL HAVE TO DESTROY IT!
BETTER REACH FOR DISTANCE, FLASH! WHEN YOUR RAY HITS THE NEUTRON PAYLOAD ..THE EXPLOSION WILL BE....
..TREMENDOUS!

SO MUCH FOR THE NEUTRON MENACE! NOW.. WHERE DO WE FIND THE HERMIT?


EASTERN FRIGIA! THE HEADINGS HAVE BEEN PROGRAMMED!
THEN WE ARE ON OUR WAY!

UNDER COMPUTER CONTROL - THE GLEAMING SWEEPER SHIP IS GUIDED OVER THE FROZEN, BARREN WASTES OF FRIGIA...

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE TERRAIN CHANGES.. FROZEN PEAKS RETREAT BEFORE THE LIFE-GIVING WARMTH OF A LUSH VALLEY!
I SEE IT.. BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT!

AS FLASH AND DR. ZARKOV MOVE IN FOR CLOSER SURVEILANCE..THE TRANQUIL VALLEY BECOMES A SCENE OF STAGGERING DANGER...
MONSTER PLANTS! ...THOUSANDS OF THEM....
AND, FLASH..THEY'RE MOVING! THEY'RE ON THE MARCH! THE HERMIT IS SENDING THEM OUT OF THE VALLEY....
THERE'S ENOUGH OF THEM TO DESTROY ALANIA! WE'VE GOT TO STOP THEM HERE IN THE VALLEY....
THEN WE'LL HAVE TO KNOCK OUT THE THERMOCON GENERATORS WHICH WARM THIS PLACE! ... IF WE CAN LOCATE THEM!
HEADS UP... HERE COMES A MISSILE!
HIT!

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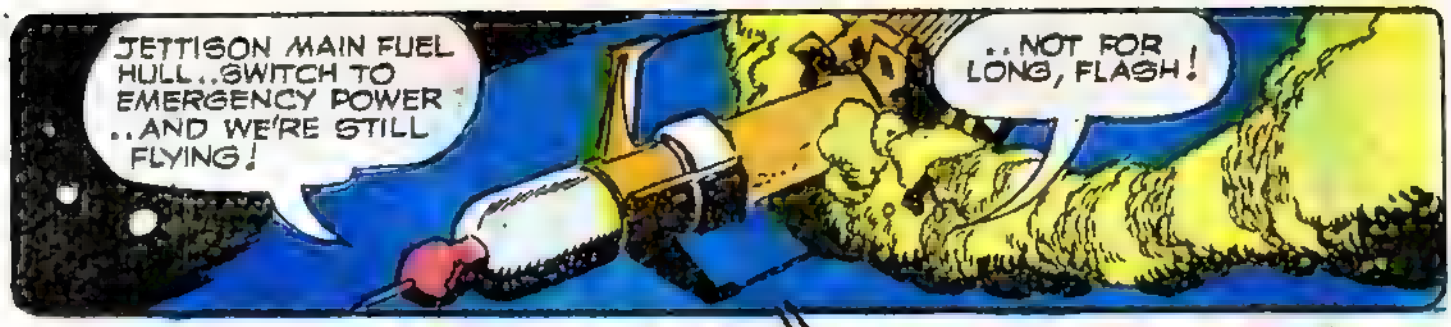
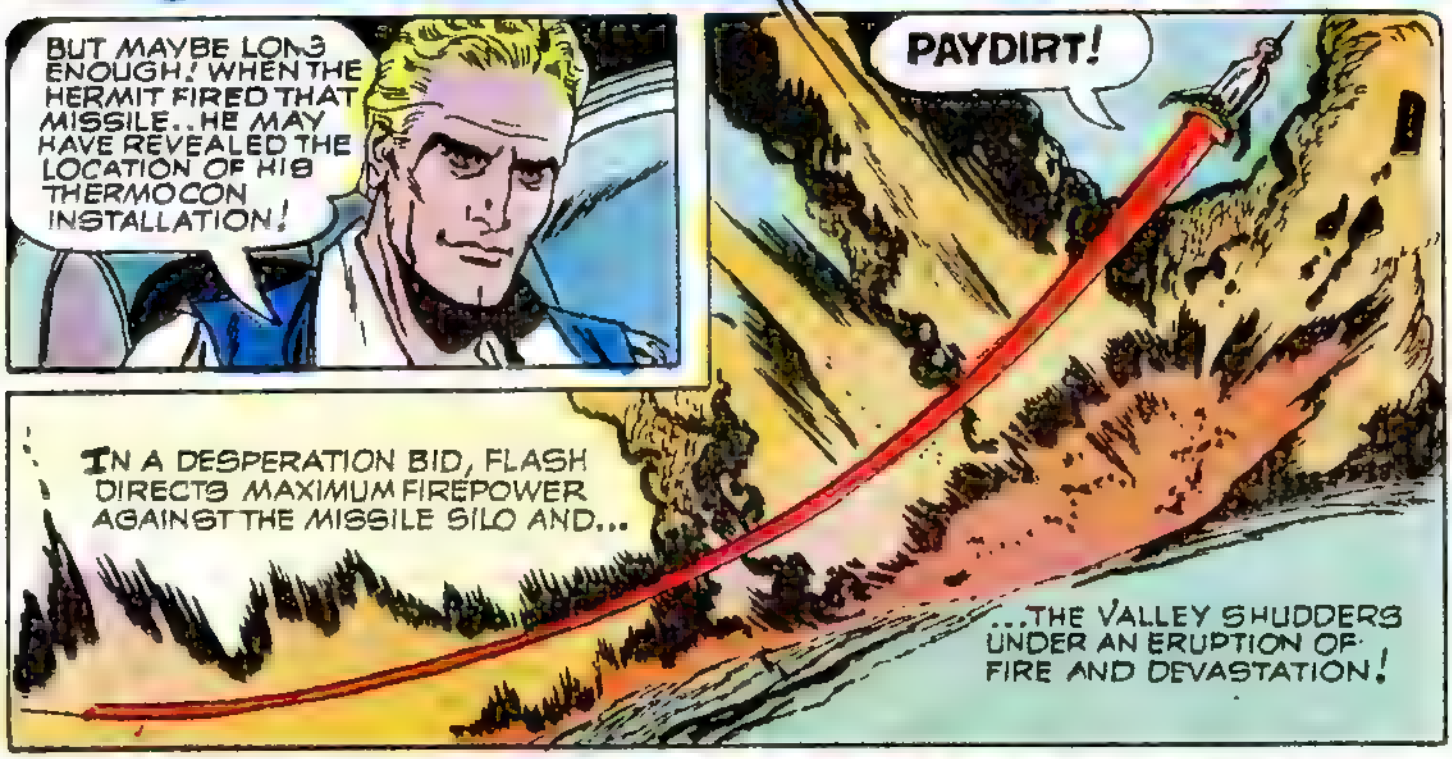
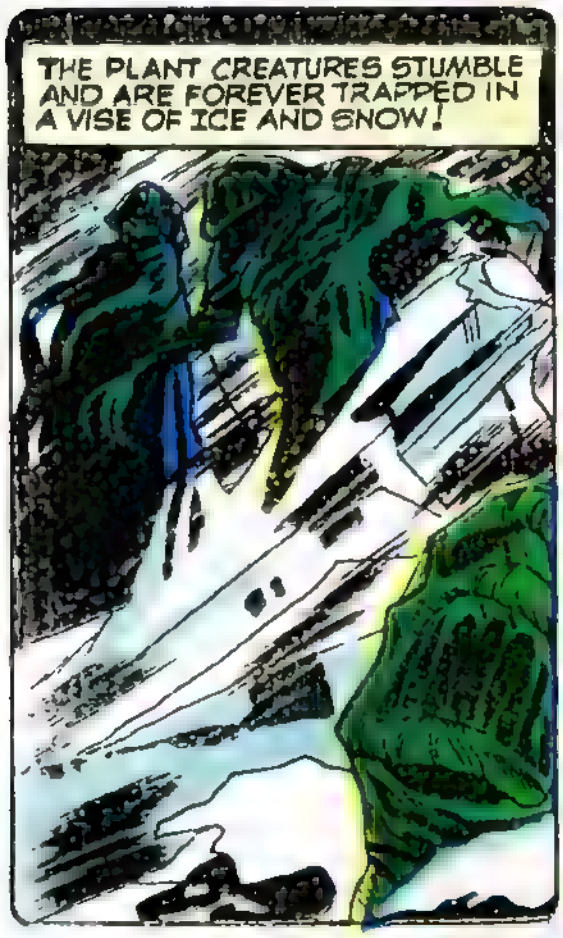
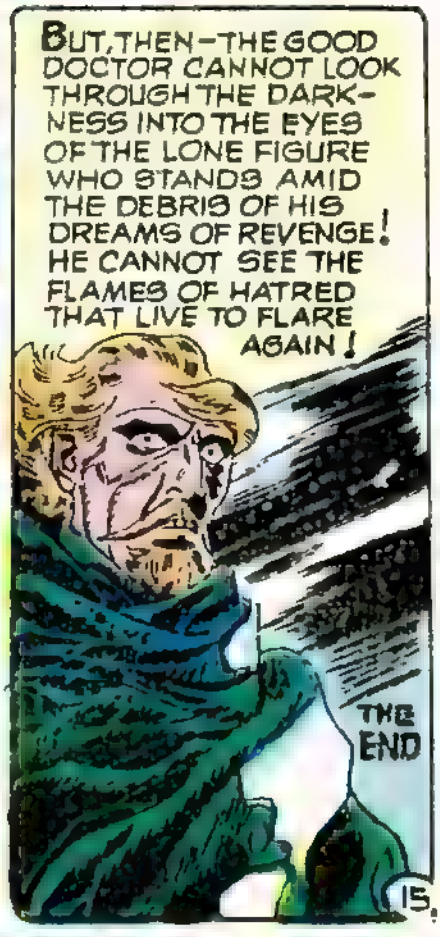

JETTISON MAIN FUEL HULL..SWITCH TO EMERGENCY POWER ..AND WE'RE STILL FLYING!
..NOT FOR LONG, FLASH!


BUT MAYBE LONG ENOUGH! WHEN THE HERMIT FIRED THAT MISSILE..HE MAY HAVE REVEALED THE LOCATION OF HIS THERMOCON INSTALLATION!
PAYDIRT!
IN A DESPERATION BID, FLASH DIRECTS MAXIMUM FIREPOWER AGAINST THE MISSILE SILO AND...
...THE VALLEY SHUDDERS UNDER AN ERUPTION OF FIRE AND DEVASTATION!

THE HOLOCAUST IS FOLLOWED BY A RAGING BLIZZARD-BORNE ON STINGING WINDS OF POLAR FURY!


THE PLANT CREATURES STUMBLE AND ARE FOREVER TRAPPED IN A VISE OF ICE AND SNOW!

WE MAY BE LIMPING HOME LIKE A WOUNDED EAGLE, BUT I THINK WE DID A JOB!
I THINK THE HERMIT HAS CEASED TO BE A PROBLEM!


BUT, THEN-THE GOOD DOCTOR CANNOT LOOK THROUGH THE DARKNESS INTO THE EYES OF THE LONE FIGURE WHO STANDS AMID THE DEBRIS OF HIS DREAMS OF REVENGE! HE CANNOT SEE THE FLAMES OF HATRED THAT LIVE TO FLARE AGAIN!
THE END

BRICK BRADFORD

by Paul NORRIS

HOPPY SEARCHES THROUGH PASSAGEWAYS....
... AND THEN....
HOLY SMOKE! WHERE DID THAT COME FROM?
MINUTES LATER HOPPY FINDS HIMSELF WITH BRICK....
BRICK, ARE YOU OKAY?
YES! I WAS OUT FOR A TIME, BUT I'M FINE NOW! HOW DID YOU GET CAUGHT?
LOOKING FOR YOU! WHAT'S THE SETUP?
THESE PEOPLE, OR MAMMALS BREATHE AIR AND WATER EQUALLY WELL! LET'S SEE IF WE CAN TAKE THE GUARD!
WE CAN TAKE HIM! HE'S TOOK!

HOPPY! DID YOU SEE WHAT HAPPENED TO BRICK?
YES! IT LOOKED AS IF A PLASTIC BUBBLE SNARED HIM AND PULLED HIM INTO THE SEA!
YOU STAY WITH THE TOP... LIFT IT OFF THE WATER AFTER I LEAVE, SADIE! I'LL USE AN ARTIFICIAL GILL AND GO AFTER BRICK!
TAKE AN EXTRA GILL FOR BRICK!
SECONDS LATER HOPPY PLUNGES INTO THE SEA...
WITH THE GILL HE IS ABLE TO SWIM AND BREATHE AS EASILY AS A FISH...
I'LL HEAD FOR THE BOTTOM! I'M SURE THAT'S WHERE BRICK WAS TAKEN!
MINUTES LATER...
THERE! A LAB UNDER THE SEA! NOW, WHERE WOULD BRICK BE?

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING P/

THIS GUN HE CARRIES SHOOTS THE BUBBLES! SOMEONE'S COMING!
BRICK USES THE GUN AS THE DOOR OPENS....
THIS SHOULD GET US OUT OF HERE!
NEVER THOUGHT BLOWING BUBBLES COULD BE SUCH FUN! OPEN THE AIR LOCK, HOPPY, THE WHOLE STAFF'S PLASTIC COATED NOW!
WILL DO! HERE'S AN EXTRA GILL FOR YOU!
A SHORT TIME LATER.... BRICK AND HOPPY SURFACE....
WHAT DO YOU THINK THEY WANTED WITH YOU, BRICK?
WHO KNOWS? I'M NOT GOING BACK TO FIND OUT!
WITHIN SECONDS THEY ARE PICKED UP BY THE TIME-TOP....
FROM NOW ON WE MAKE MINOR REPAIRS ON DRY LAND... AND NO CRACKS ABOUT ME TAKING A BUBBLE BATH!
END

Death Defier

Cable Car Catastrophe

My full name is John Allen Wallington. In reports my three initials are used: J.A.W. But in the various countries in the world that use my services, I am known as "Death Defier." For wherever there is a challenge to justice, there I go. I care not if I have to be on the burning sands of the desert, the freezing snows of the Arctic, the highest mountain in the world, or through unknown jungle areas. All that counts is that justice must be done. And often the challenger is Death!

And in this episode, the challenger was Death with the lives of 16 innocent people at stake. At that given moment I was sitting at a table by myself in the cafe Toumain, in Ingelsbruck. I had brought some confidential papers to the capital and then drove out to this famous resort for a few days of relaxation. A police car stopped at the curb and an official got out. He came up to me at my table.

"My name in Captain Hans Letterman," he said. "We were notified from the capital that you were here. Please come to my car. We need your help at once. It is a matter of life or death."

I went with him to his car and he told me the ternble news. The cable car going up to the mountain had slipped off one wheel and the linking cable had snapped.

"The weather report is very bad," he informed me. "By nine this evening the wind velocity will be more than 50 miles per hour. And that would hurl the cable car down into the valley. My wife and my little daughter are among the passengers."

Ten minutes later we were at the loading platform of the cable Tram that connected the valley with the famous mountain. I was introduced to Johan Siegel, the chief mechanic.

"I have three of my best men here," he told me. "We can run the downhill cable car uphill so that we are opposite the other cable car. If we can but lift the snapped cable up and get the wheel on its track, we can pull that cable to safety. We realize it would be too dangerous to even think of trying to transfer the passengers from car to car.

I got into that cable car. The men brought with them a lot of material that might help in the rescue. Slowly we inched up until we were now opposite the dangling car.

"Back up to the next cross-arm," I said. "I will then try to cross over. You will hold a rope attached to my body in case I fall. Also give me a thick pair of gloves."

Fortunately I did not slip. I crossed over and the people in the dangling car saw me and that must have helped their courage. I then climbed underneath the car. Took the rope off my body and I managed to attach it to the broken part of the cable. Then I climbed back to my cable car with part of the rope in my hand.

"Attach this rope to the car," I ordered. "Then move slowly. You will bring the dangling car up. The next move, if this works, is to get that wheel in position."

It worked and then my next step was a most dangerous one.

"Give me the crowbar. I can get the wheel back but it may slip off again. And if it does, that car will crash down to destruction. I will have to stand or kneel on the top of the car. And with the crowbar try to hold the wheel in place."

"But that may be almost certain death for you," protested Johan Siegel.

"If I don't, then it will be almost certain death for the people trapped in that car. I think the wind velocity is increasing."

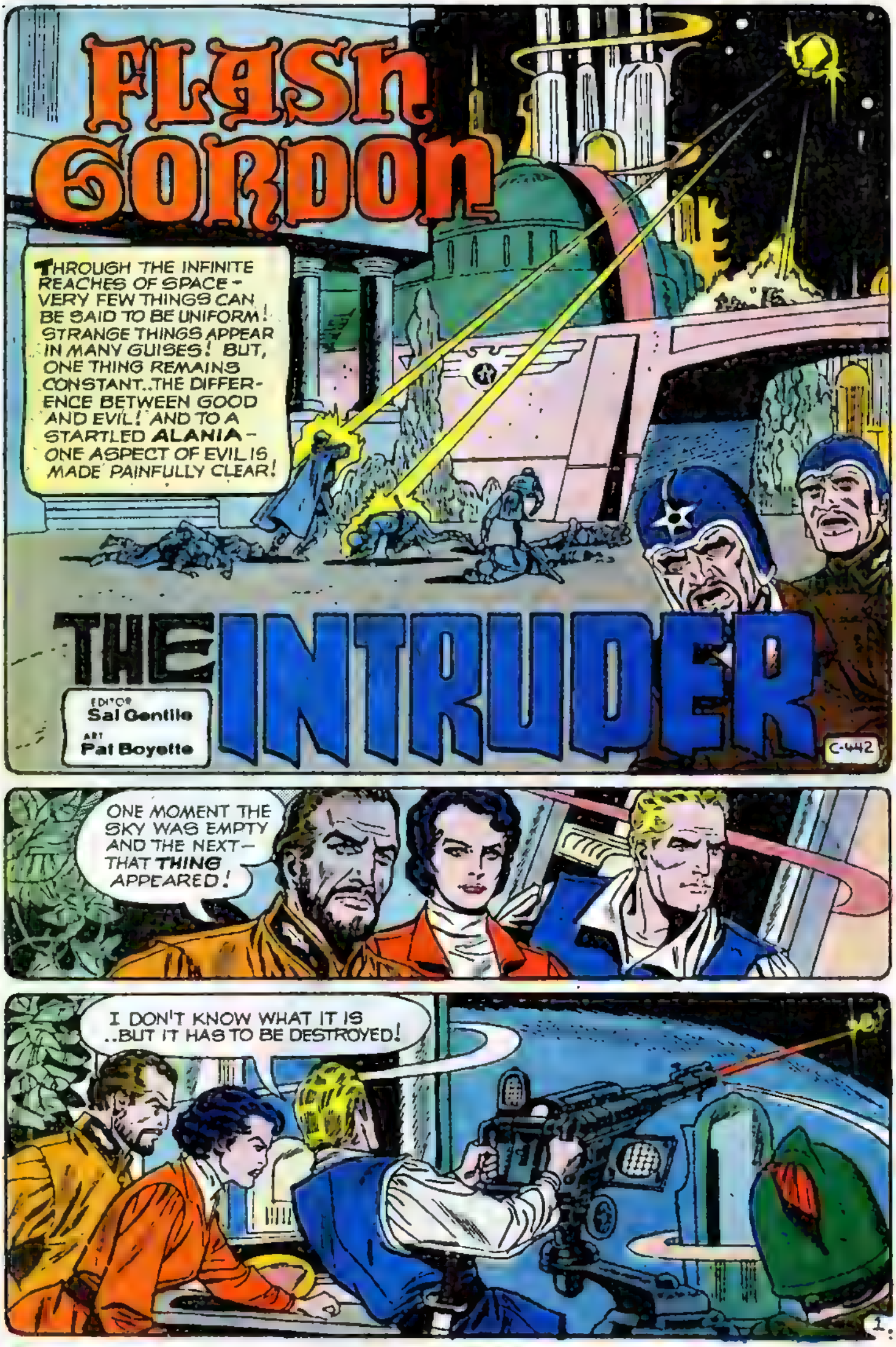
I got on top of the car and used the rope to hold myself in one position. I needed every ounce of strength that my body could muster. With the crowbar I pressed against the housing of the wheel.

We went slowly downhill to the valley. To the people inside the car, it must have seemed like an eternity. Actually it took only a little more than an hour. But when we were safe again, the wind had increased. It was more than evident that we had just beaten Death by only a short interval of time.

Johan Siegel took the hand of a very old woman and brought her up to me.

"You saved my grandmother among the people. She feels you are no ordinary person. What have you to say to her?"

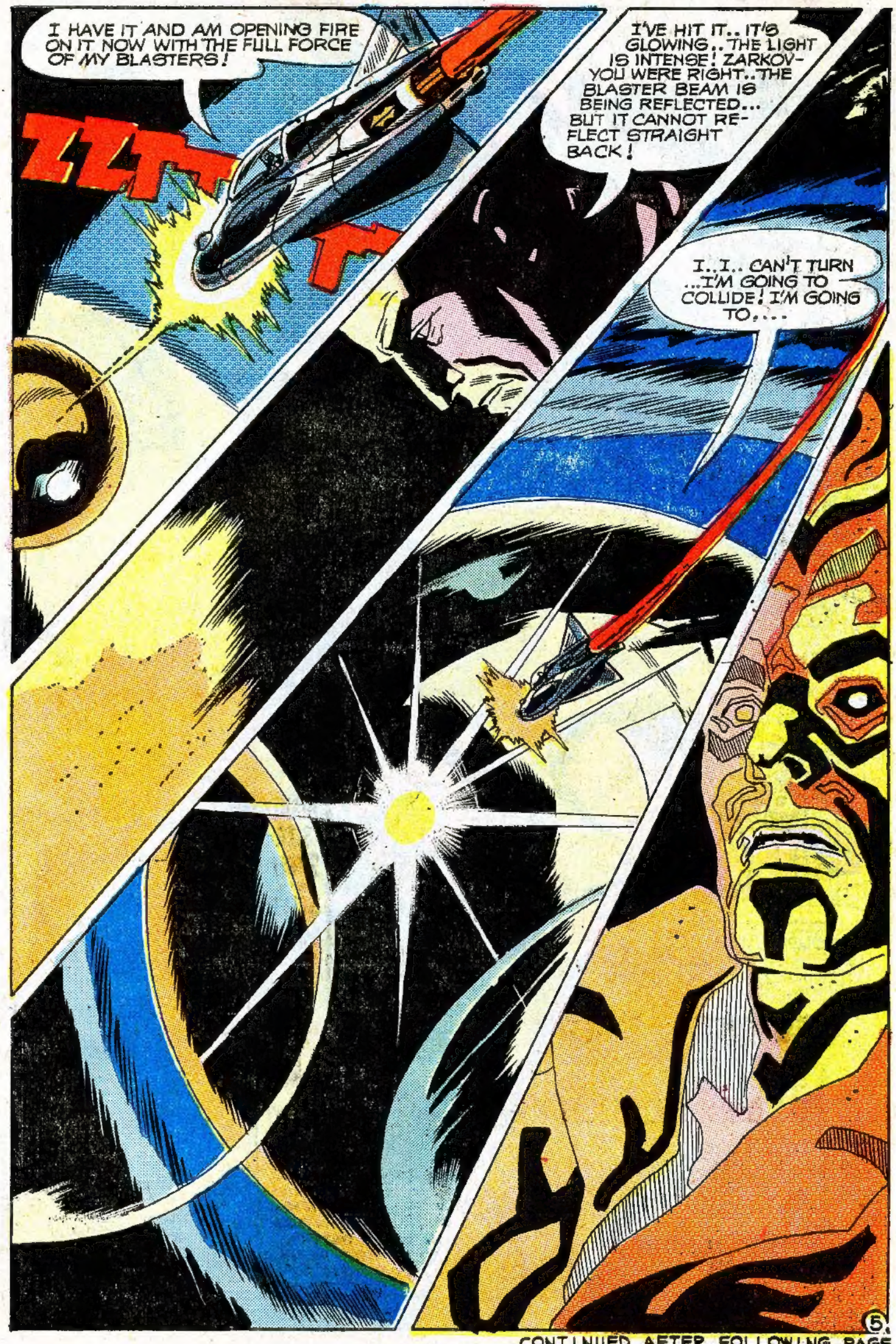
What to say? I just smiled and kissed her on the cheek. Death had been cheated this time out of its prey.


FLASH GORDON
THROUGH THE INFINITE REACHES OF SPACE - VERY FEW THINGS CAN BE SAID TO BE UNIFORM! STRANGE THINGS APPEAR IN MANY GUISES! BUT, ONE THING REMAINS CONSTANT..THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN GOOD AND EVIL! AND TO A STARTLED ALANIA - ONE ASPECT OF EVIL IS MADE PAINFULLY CLEAR!
THE INTRUDER
EDITOR Sal Gentile
ART Pat Boyette
C-442
ONE MOMENT THE SKY WAS EMPTY AND THE NEXT - THAT THING APPEARED!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS ..BUT IT HAS TO BE DESTROYED!
1

THEN..NEAR TRAGEDY..THE BLASTER'S ENERGY IS REFLECTED BACK ON THE CITY!
GREAT TAO..I'VE BLASTED MY OWN PEOPLE!
THANK GOD..THEY'RE ONLY STUNNED!
WHATEVER IT IS, IT DISSIPATES ENERGY!
I'VE GOT TO THINK OF ANOTHER LINE OF DEFENSE!
WHA... IT'S GONE!
A SHORT TIME LATER:
..THEN YOU WOULD SAY IT IS NOT OF OUR SYSTEM?
I CAN FIND NO LISTED DEVICE THAT IS REMOTELY SIMILAR!
THEN WHAT IS IT ..AND WHERE DID IT COME FROM?
AT THIS POINT, I HAVEN'T THE FAINTEST IDEA!

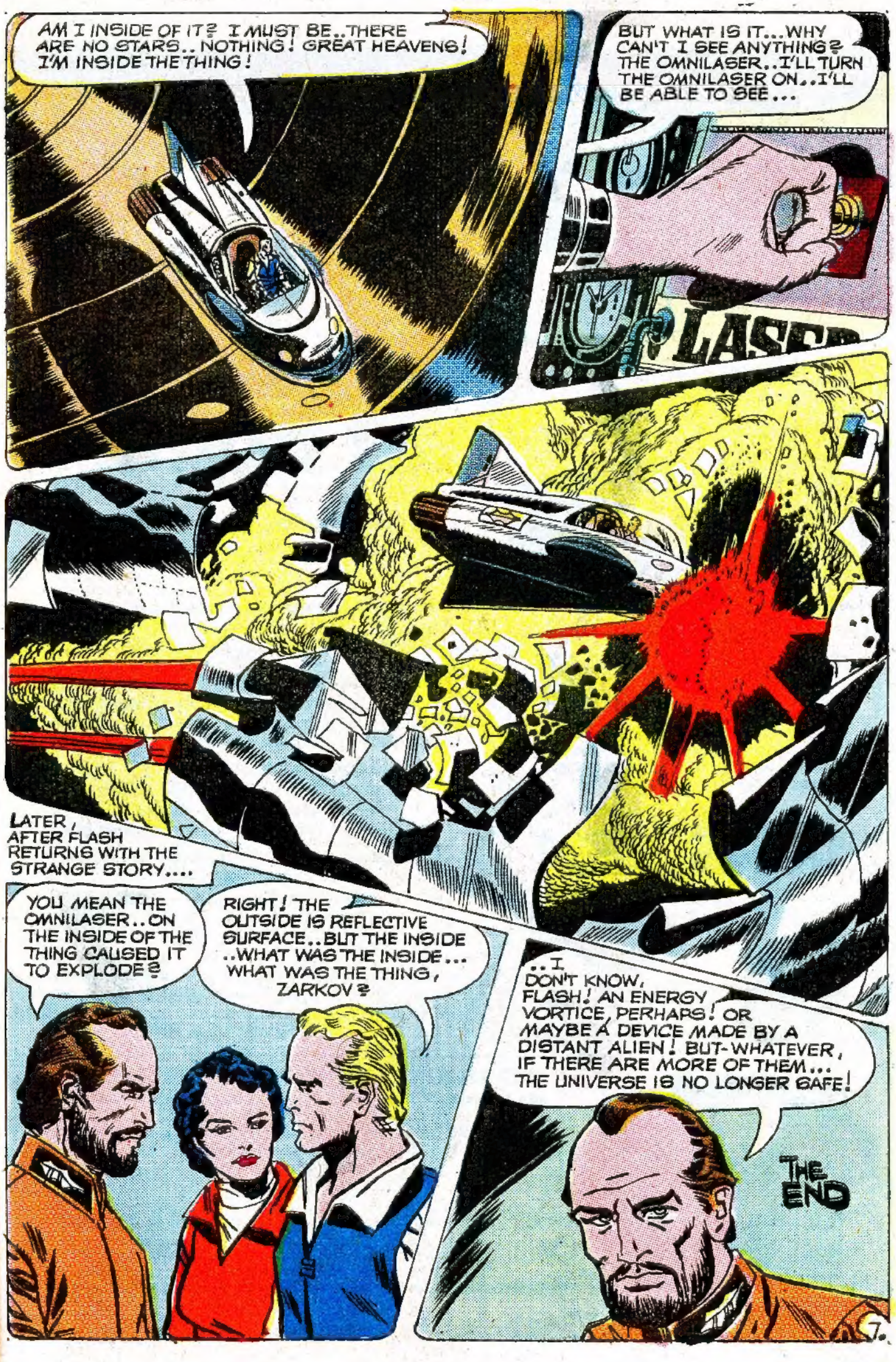
LATER, IN AN EFFORT TO SOLVE THE MYSTERIOUS INTRUDER'S WHEREABOUTS..
BUT HOW DO YOU EXPECT TO FIND IT IF YOU DON'T HAVE ANY IDEA WHERE IT WENT?
I'VE GOT TO TRY, DALE, THE FUTURE OF ALANIA MAY DEPEND ON IT!
AND SO..FLASH GORDON AGAIN REACHES INTO THE UNKNOWN!
BUT HOW CAN A SINGLE MAN FIGHT..THAT.. THING?
FLASH..ISN'T LOOKING FOR A FIGHT, DALE! HE ONLY WANTS TO KNOW WHAT ..AND WHERE THE DEVICE IS?
REACHING THE VOID OF NEAR SPACE.. FLASH TURNS HIS ROCKET TOWARD THE CREEPING DARKNESS WHICH SIGNALS NIGHT FOR THOSE BOUND TO THE PLANET BELOW...
IF ZARKOV IS RIGHT..I'D BETTER TURN ON MY OMNILASER NOW!
9

THE LIGHT PRODUCED BY THE OMNILASER SHOULD BRING THE THING OUT OF HIDING..IF THAT'S WHAT IT'S DOING!
THERE! A FLASH OF LIGHT! THE DEVICE!
ZARKOV..CAN YOU HEAR ME? I'VE GOTTEN A RESPONSE TO MY SIGNAL..I'M GOING IN TO SEE IF I'VE FOUND THE DEVICE..MONITOR ME... I MAY NOT COME BACK!
OH! HE MUSTN'T TRY TO FIGHT ALONE ..HE MUSTN'T!
IF WHAT I SUSPECT IS TRUE, DALE...HE HAS TO! THERE IS NO OTHER WAY!
I HAVE IT! THE GLOBE..IT'S HERE IN THE SHADOW OF THE KRAZNIA MOUNTAINS!
REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU, FLASH! WHEN YOU FIRE..HEAD STRAIGHT FOR IT..DON'T PULL UP UNTIL YOU HAVE STOPPED FIRING!


I HAVE IT AND AM OPENING FIRE ON IT NOW WITH THE FULL FORCE OF MY BLASTERS!
ZZT
I'VE HIT IT.. IT'S GLOWING.. THE LIGHT IS INTENSE! ZARKOV- YOU WERE RIGHT.. THE BLASTER BEAM IS BEING REFLECTED... BUT IT CANNOT RE-FLECT STRAIGHT BACK!
I..I.. CAN'T TURN ...I'M GOING TO COLLIDE! I'M GOING TO....

CONTINUED AFTER FOLLOWING PAGE

WH..WHAT HAPPENED? DID HE CRASH INTO IT?
I...I'M AFRAID SO..THE TRANSMISSION HAS STOPPED!
AND..THE GLOBE HAS DISAPPEARED FROM THE SCANOSCOPE!
ZARKOV..WHY DON'T YOU ANSWER ME..ZARKOV! BLAST! TRANSMISSION IS RUINED! WHATEVER IT WAS I HIT .. RUINED MY RADIOS!
GREAT SCOT! WHAT DID I HIT? WHAT WAS IT..AND WHERE IS IT?


AM I INSIDE OF IT? I MUST BE..THERE ARE NO STARS.. NOTHING! GREAT HEAVENS! I'M INSIDE THE THING!
BUT WHAT IS IT...WHY CAN'T I SEE ANYTHING? THE OMNILASER..I'LL TURN THE OMNILASER ON..I'LL BE ABLE TO SEE...
LASER
LATER, AFTER FLASH RETURNS WITH THE STRANGE STORY....
YOU MEAN THE OMNILASER..ON THE INSIDE OF THE THING CAUSED IT TO EXPLODE?
RIGHT! THE OUTSIDE IS REFLECTIVE SURFACE..BUT THE INSIDE ..WHAT WAS THE INSIDE... WHAT WAS THE THING, ZARKOV?
..I DON'T KNOW, FLASH! AN ENERGY VORTICE, PERHAPS! OR MAYBE A DEVICE MADE BY A DISTANT ALIEN! BUT-WHATEVER, IF THERE ARE MORE OF THEM... THE UNIVERSE IS NO LONGER SAFE!
THE END